At the first hint of sunlight, her eyes jolt open. Immediately awake and conscious, devoid of any normal post-sleep grogginess, she sits up and stretches. Her bones pop like automatic gunfire and she lets out a deep sigh. And then, just as suddenly as she awoke, it hits her.
The hunger.
The terrible, nauseating hunger.
It's like nothing she's ever felt before, but somehow, also familiar to her. Like an old love she hasn't seen for years but at the first sound of his voice, all the memories come flooding back.
She reaches across the bed.
Empty.
Suddenly, she feels less awake. Less alert.
What was she reaching for?
She suddenly can't remember, but like a primal urge, a creaturely instinct, she knows something is terribly wrong.

—

Passing through her apartment on the way to the door, she doesn't manage to pick up any of the clothes strewn about or fix any of her displaced furniture.
Her computer chair, removed from it's place at the desk, now sits in the corner at a 45 degree angle. A man's dress shirt with multiple buttons popped off lies just inches from it.
Her coffee table, flipped over on it's side. The dining room table is in much the same position, and the centerpiece of decorative plates has found a new home on the floor.
She hurriedly slips on her best pair of walking shoes, opens the door, and exits her home, with only one thing on her mind:
The hunger.

—

The cold winter air bites her as she walks. Though it was clearly daytime in her apartment, it still smells like nighttime outside.
It's a slow Saturday morning, the kind of morning she used to enjoy.
Fighting back an oncoming headache as she picks up her heavy feet, she can't bear to spend precious time and energy reminiscing. She must remain focused on one thing:
One thing.
One thing.
What was it? She can't remember. Frustrated, she recalls this sensation. It's something right on the tip of her tongue. Inside her aching mouth that's burning. That burning turns to sweetness as she tries to ignore the pain in her stomach that's screaming at her, begging for relief, like a prisoner asking for mercy.
What was it?
What's missing?
She's not sure if this was the answer or if her current state is continuing to obscure her more rational self beyond all hope of reaching, but the only word she can manage to claim from her aching body, pulling directly from her last reserves of energy is:

“Hungry”

—

She's shaking. The world is a mess of white and gray, only broken by the occasional streetlight. The entire universe, it seems, is coming to a stop. Even the snow seems to be falling slower. Slower.
Until her vision becomes photographic, the scenery only changing when she blinks.
And then suddenly, just like her decorations and furniture, she's seeing the world from a new angle. The wrong angle. She's spinning. Her mind lags behind her body.
Where am I?
She holds her hand up to the sky, attempting to gain a read on her current relation to this new, positionally-agnostic world.
She's on her back.
When did she fall?
‘Oh right,’ she thinks, suddenly remembering what dropped her to the ground.
She rolls over onto her stomach, somehow musters just enough strength to raise her frail and fading body from the snow-covered ground, and expels the contents of her stomach. The color is identical to the snow.
The world is nothing but a mess of white and gray.
Until, finally, the color palette is broken by a single flicker of something. She catches it reflecting off her nails, and she looks up to greet it with open arms. It was only for a second, but it was undeniable.
It was a light. A green light. A green porch light.
She knew it was. There was no mistaking it. And if it truly was a green light, she also knew why it's not safe to keep it on for more than that split second. But it didn't matter. She knew what she saw. That split second was all she needed. With a renewed sense of purpose and a growing euphoria, she walks toward the light.

—

She approaches the two-story house, still shaking, but no longer from the cold or the hunger.
Is this happiness?
Anticipation?
Before she can answer herself, she realizes she's unconsciously been knocking on the door in front of her.
“How long-” she begins to question, silently to herself.
And then something in her mind breaks.
Something demands her full attention.
It's not a full break, more like a crack. Like a crumbling prison wall that brings with it the danger of collapse, but the prisoner doesn't care. He's just happy to see a little more light slipping into his cell.
This prisoner is her, and she screams through the deafening, still silence of the world.
The gray and white.

The emptiness
The longing
The temptation.
The confusion.
The hunger.
And the primal instinct that’s been trying to contact her all day finally speaks:
“This is what they felt before I-”
Just as quickly as her world was shattered, it regains composure at the sound of the deadbolt unlocking and the door creaking open.
She had something on the tip of her tongue. Something her mouth wanted to express.
Something from deep inside her.
What was it?
What was it she can't remember?
Suddenly, relief. She had an answer.
She didn't care if it was the right answer, but it gave her mind peace to have an answer.
Regardless of whether or not it was what she was planning to say a split-second prior, another instinct speaks for her, this one stronger than the one before:
“I'm hungry”, she says, as she's now face to face with the man inside the house. He's holding the door open, inviting her in, looking at her with soft, dilated pupils and a welcoming smile.
“Let's eat.”